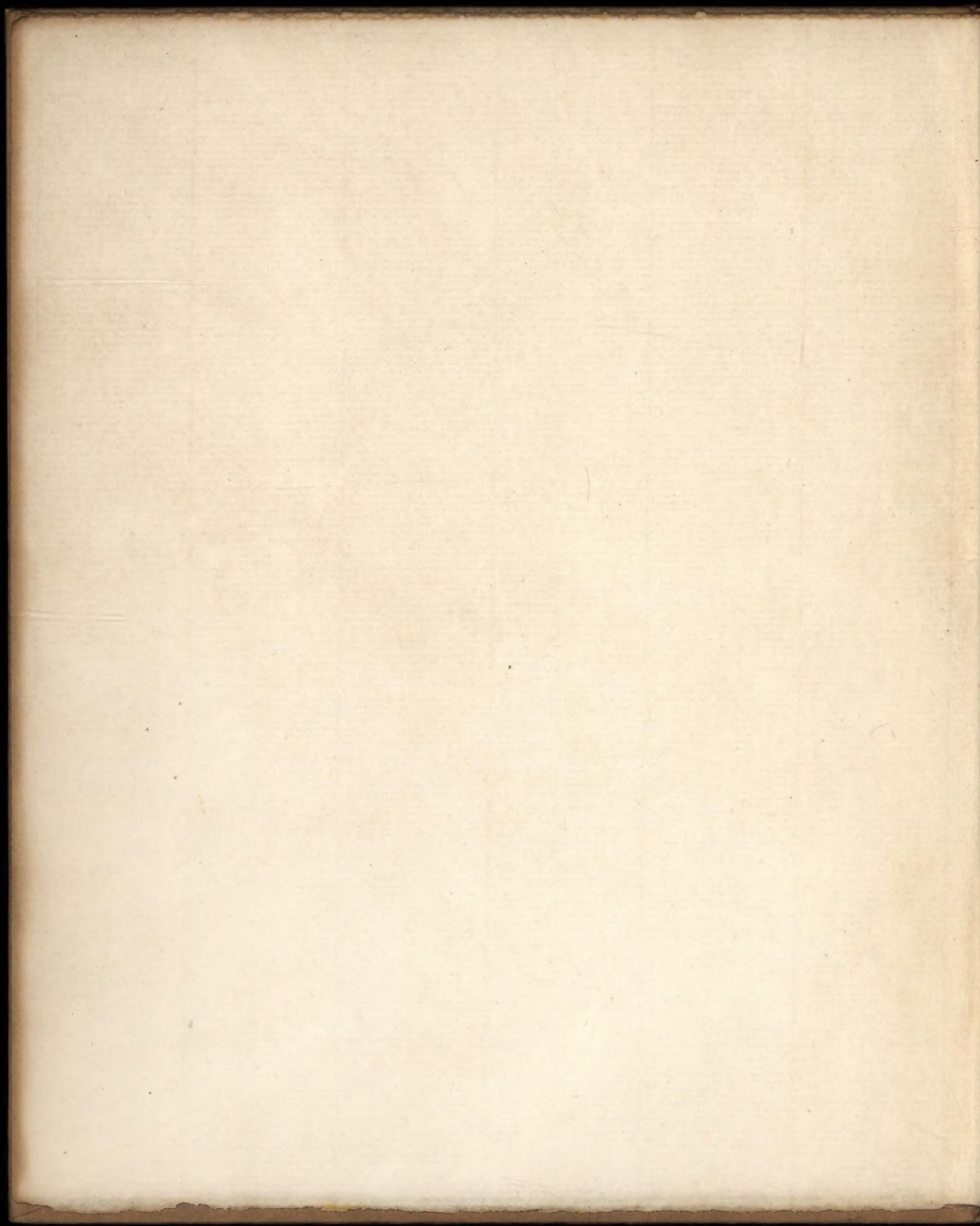


MR. WHISTLER'S

"TEN O'CLOCK"



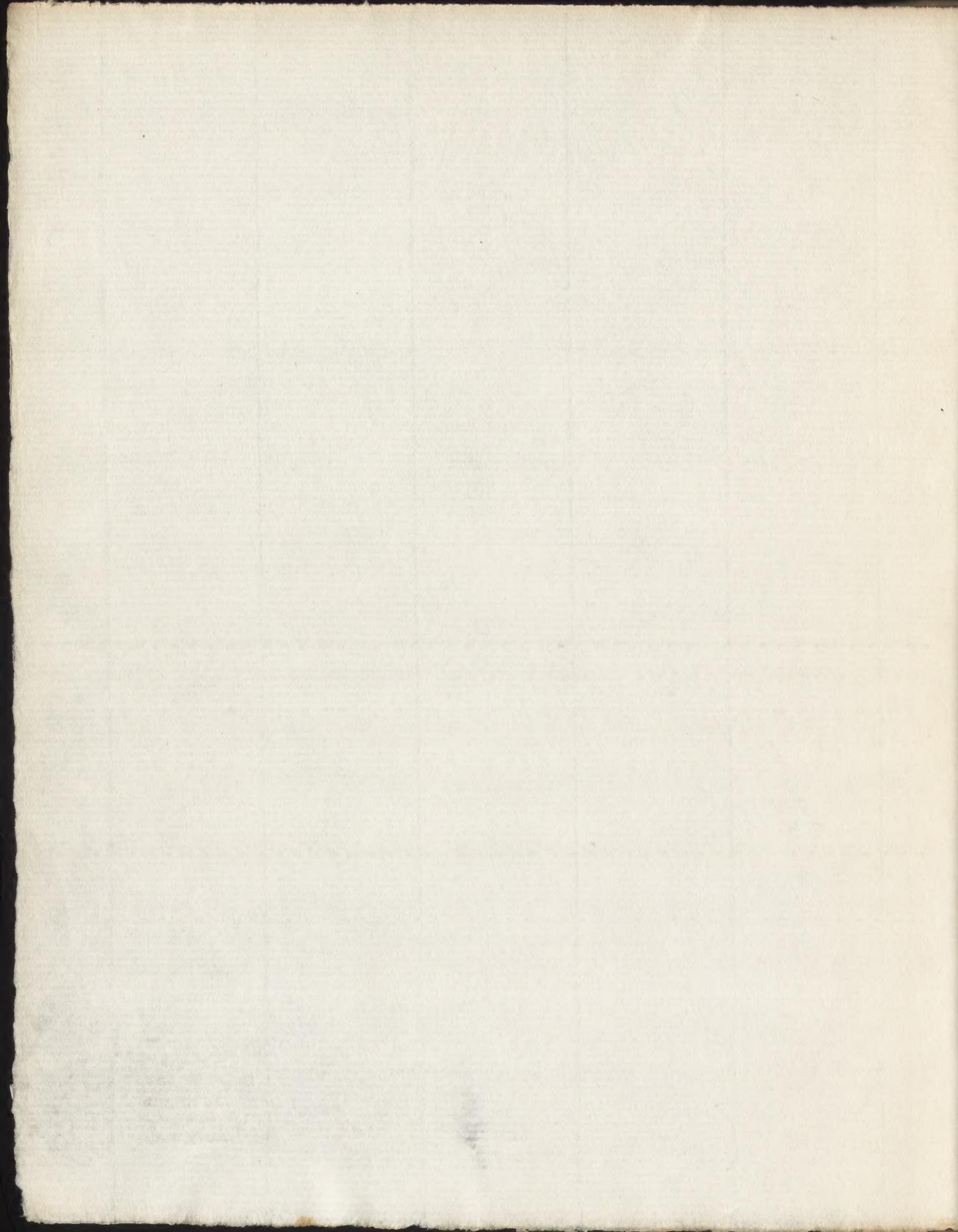


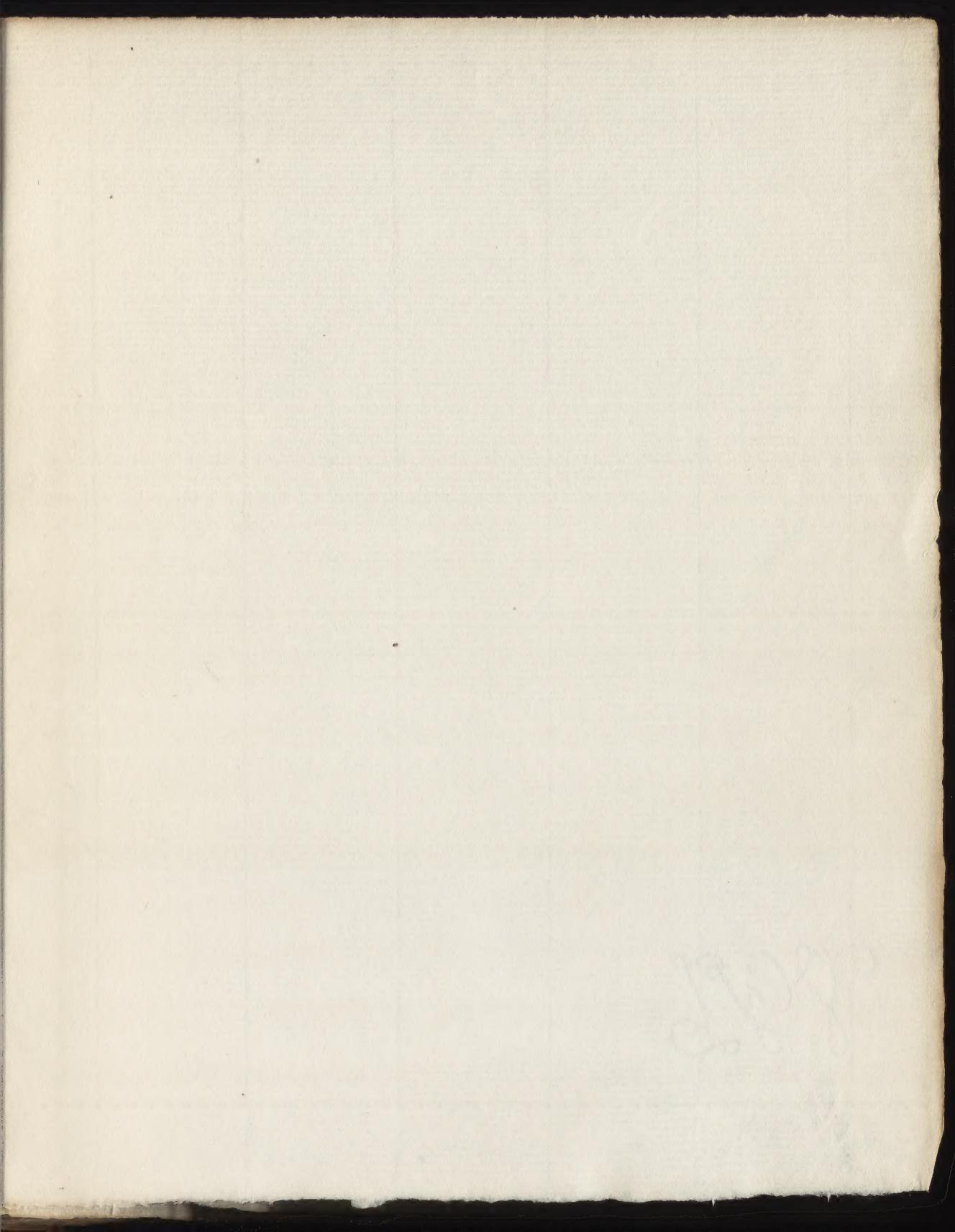
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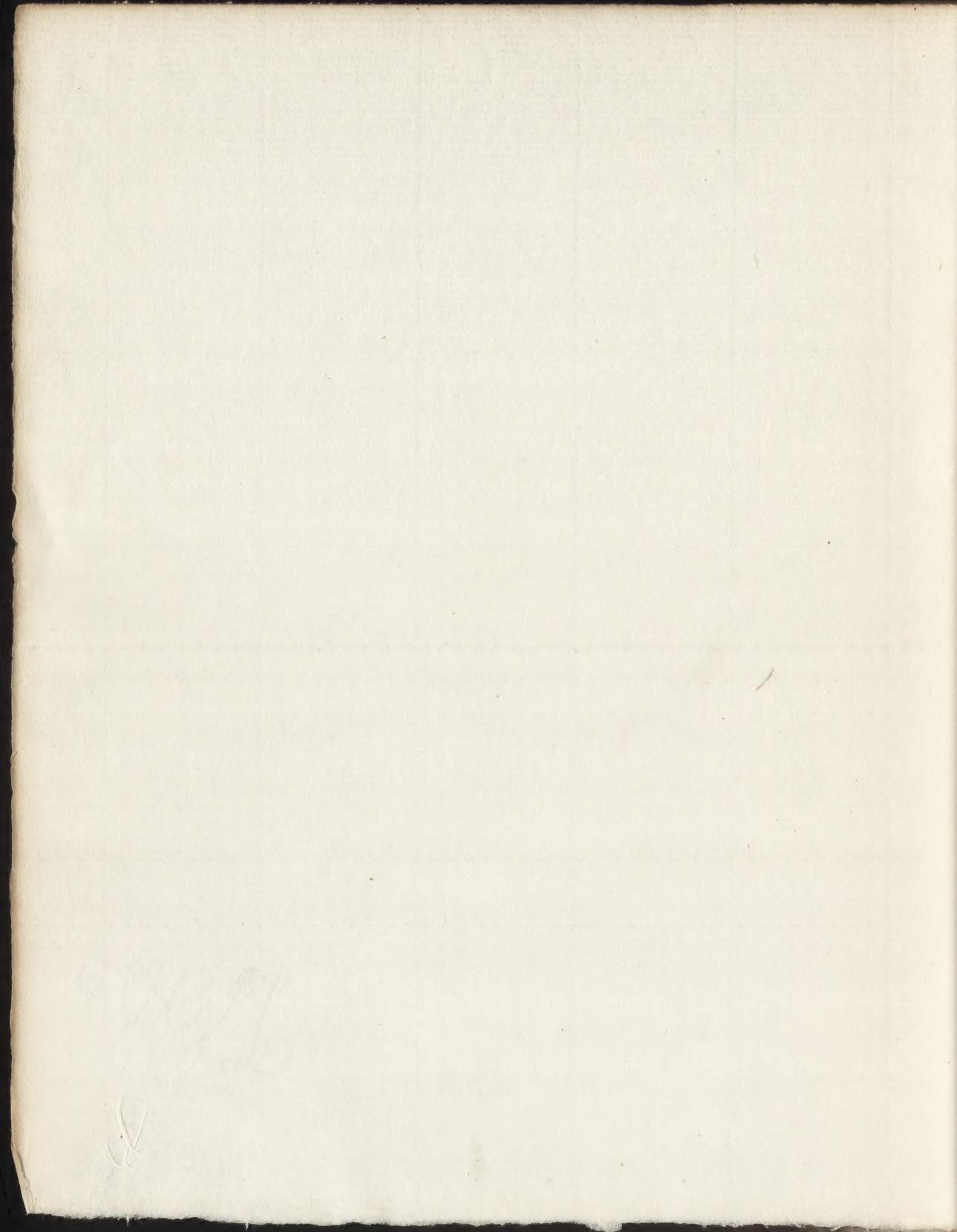
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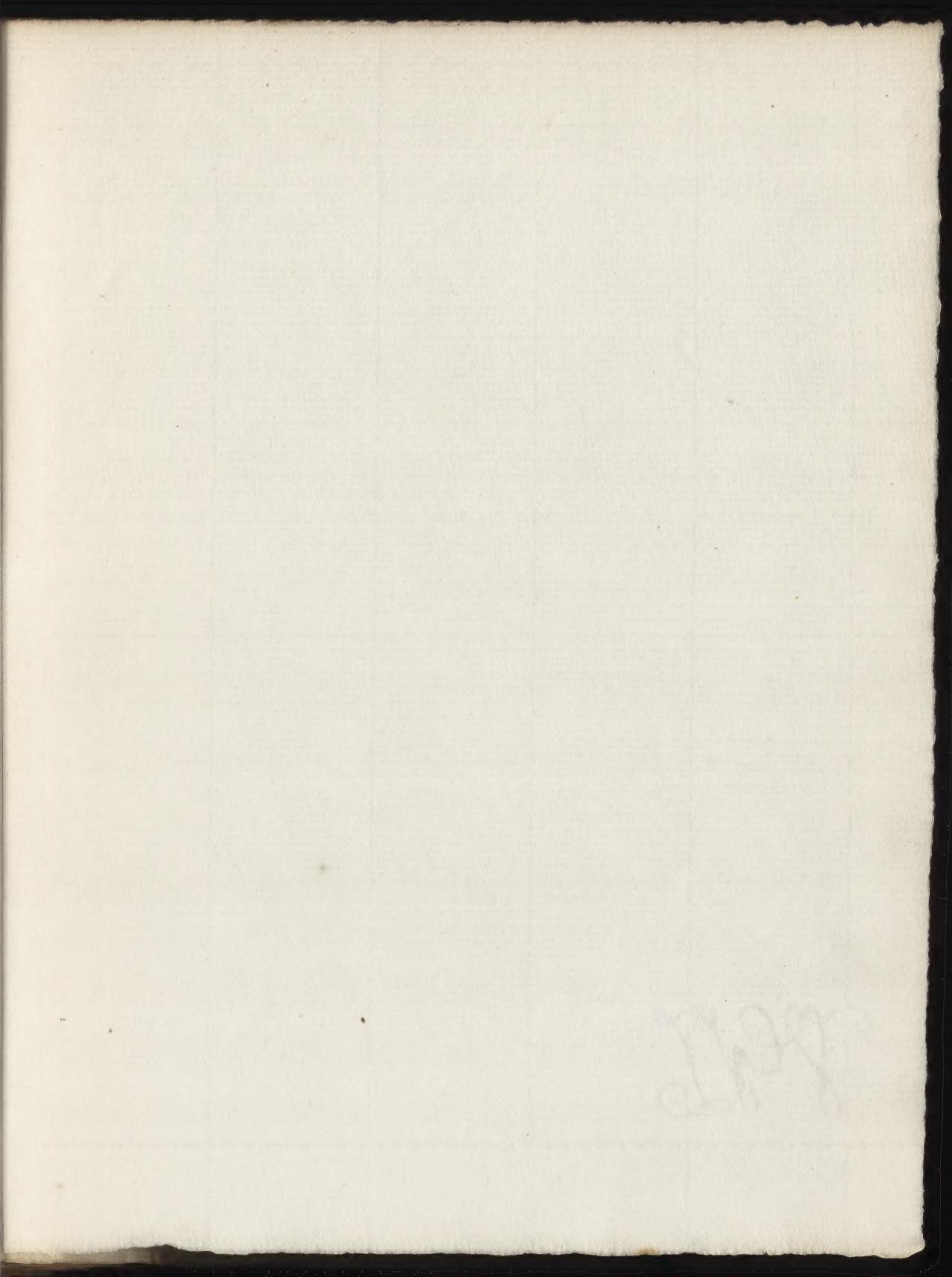
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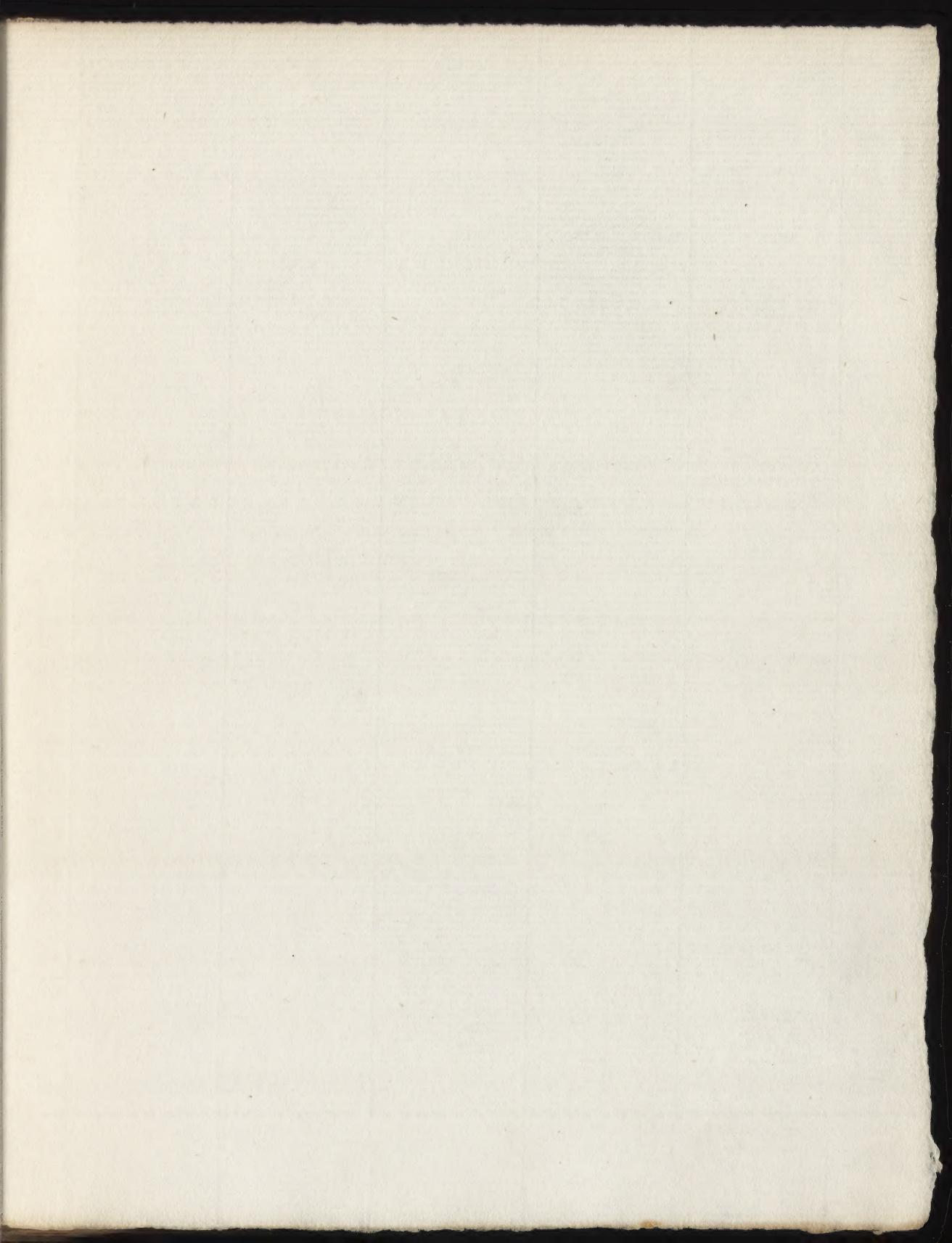


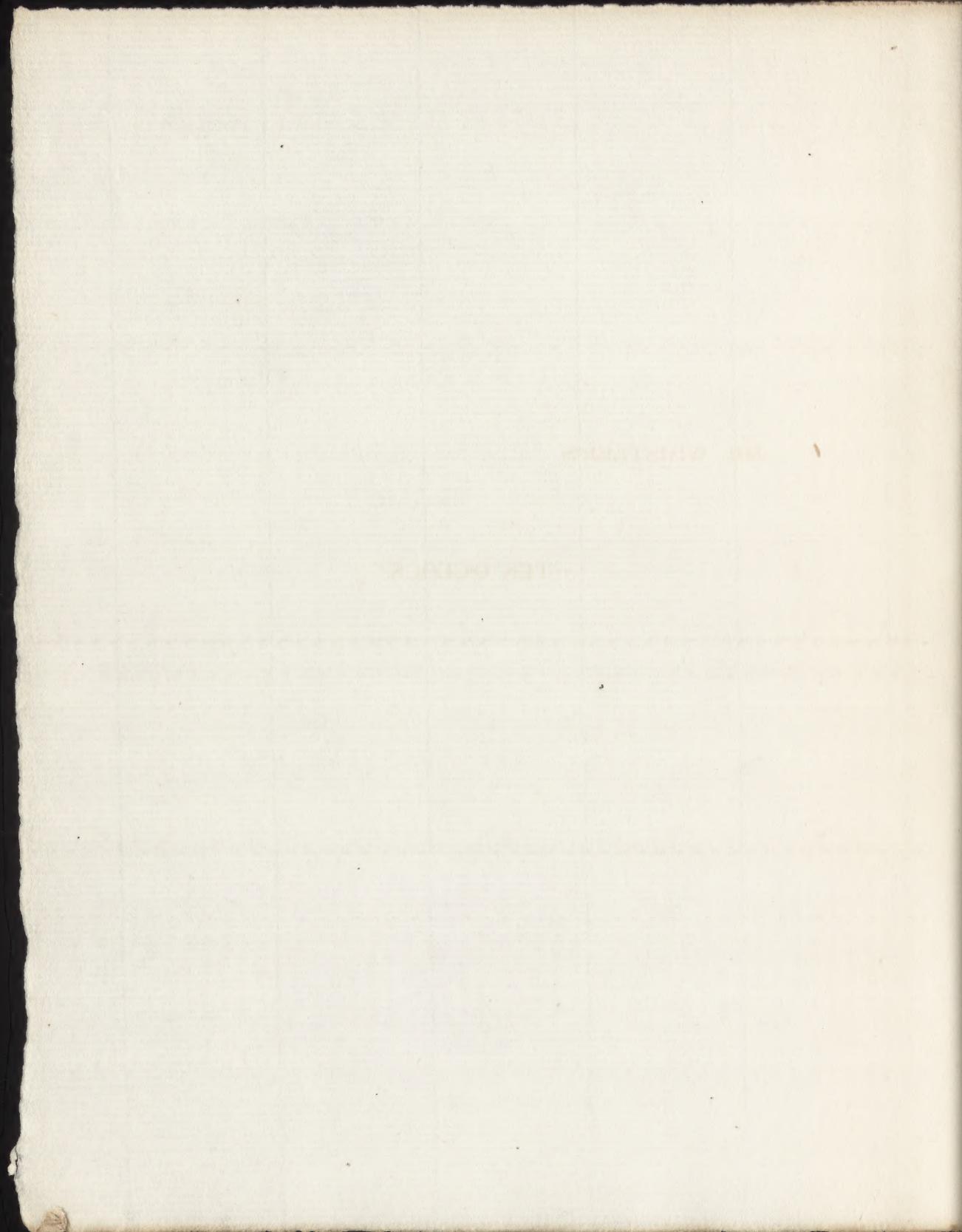






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MR. WHISTLER'S

“TEN O'CLOCK”

And whatever may be thought of reprinting entire The Gentle Art, there can be no question about the great need of scattering broadcast the . . . Ten o'Clock.

ARTHUR JEROME EDDY.

In the Ten o'Clock he brought his style to perfection. His philosophy, based on the eternal truths of art, was expressed with the beauty that endures for all time.

ELIZABETH R. AND JOSEPH PENNELL.

“TEN O’CLOCK”

A L E C T U R E B Y
J A M E S A. M C N E I L L
W H I S T L E R



PORTLAND MAINE
THOMAS BIRD MOSHER
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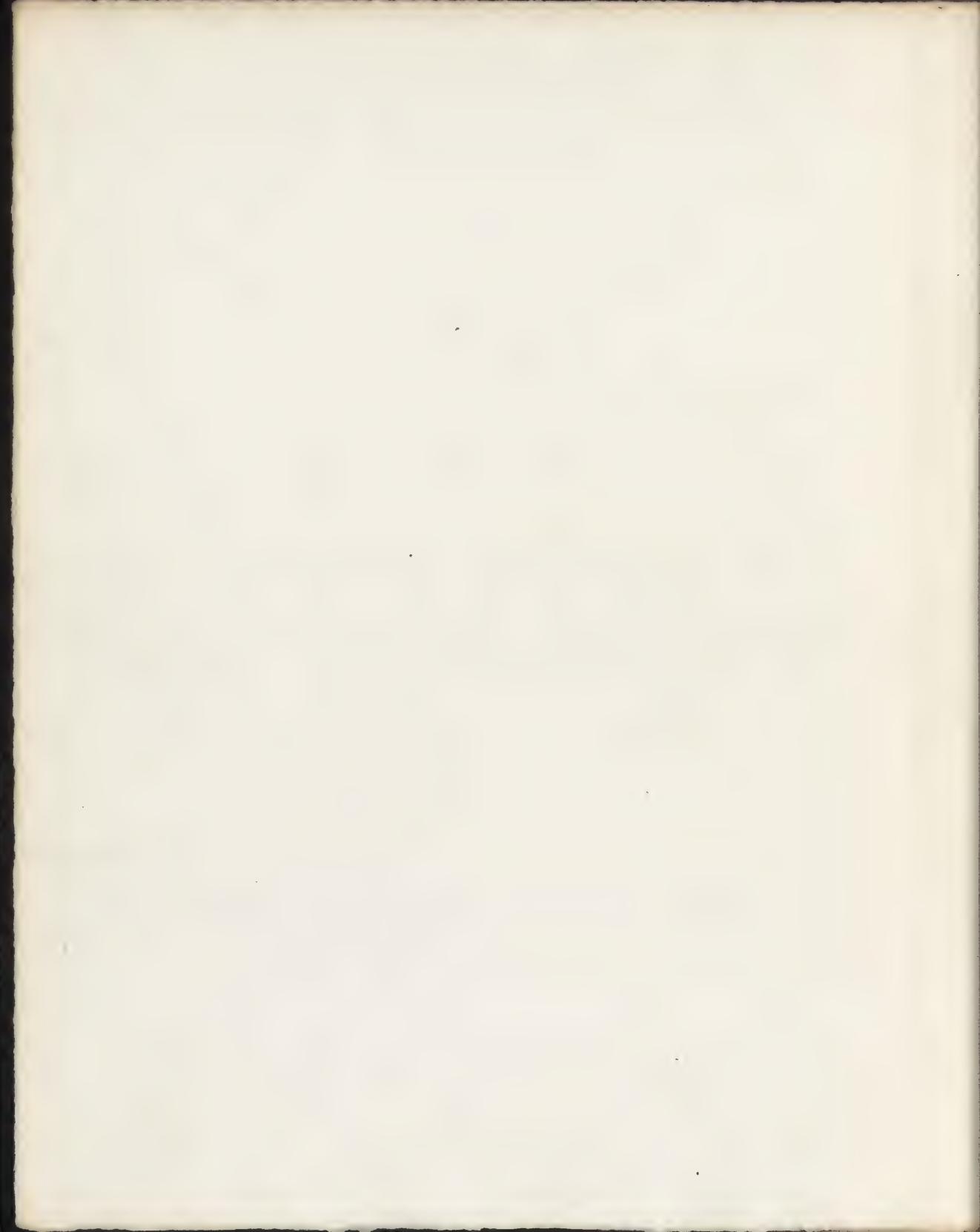
1916

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FOREWORD

JAMES ABBOTT MCNEILL WHISTLER

BORN IN LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS, JULY 10, 1834.

DIED IN LONDON, JULY 17, 1903.

It was a grey, stormy summer day, and as the clergyman said the last prayers, and the coffin was lowered, the thick London atmosphere wrapped the green enclosure in the magic and mystery that Whistler was the first to see and to reveal. The grave was made by the side of his wife under a wall covered with clematis. A low railing, like the trellis in the garden at the Rue du Bac, with flowers growing over it, shuts in the little unmarked plot of ground where Whistler, the greatest artist and most striking personality of the nineteenth century, lies at rest in a remote corner of the London he loved, not far from the house, and nearer the grave, of Hogarth, who had been to him the greatest English master from the days of his boyhood in St. Petersburg.

HIS NAME AND HIS FAME WILL LIVE FOREVER.

JOSEPH PENNELL,

ELIZABETH ROBINS PENNELL.

AUGUST 24, 1911.

FOREWORD

MORE than thirty years have passed since a curious audience of Londoners, belonging to the upper circle of Art and Intellect, gathered in Prince's Hall at ten o'clock on the evening of February 20th, 1885, to hear James Abbott McNeill Whistler make his first essay as a lecturer. He had fixed the hour himself as a time best fitted to meet the convenience of that exalted society and from the hour gave his talk its name. As "Ten o'Clock" it endures. No one knew what eccentricity the artist would develop. More came to be amused than instructed. They thought rather to hear an exquisite pipe a thin threnody of art, with quips and quirks at critics and public. Instead the small figure in black, looking much like his portrait of Sarasate, grew into transcendent size, the threnody expanded into a sonorous song, exalting art—magnificent, immortal! It reads to-day like a mighty chant, fit to be sung by a great chorus.

Like all his works it was not the offspring of the moment, a thing of hasty inspiration. It was the product of long and tense thinking, the compounding of well-digested ideas, the fruit of exacting experience. It was polished and perfected and much rehearsed. The chance to lecture came to him from Mrs. R. D'Oyley Carte, wife of the impressario to whom we owe the first glories of the "Mikado" and the rest of the joyous

Gilbert and Sullivan memories. She had been Miss Lenoir, of the London stage, and was her husband's chief aid in his productions, having a tiny office in the Savoy Theatre lit with a dim little lamp, throwing strange shadowings. The treatise had been growing like a mosaic, preferably for publication, when an invitation to address the Dublin Sketching Club suggested its use as a lecture. Whistler did not get to Dublin, but George Augustus Sala heard the notes read and introduced him to Mrs. Carte, who won the artist over to the Prince's Hall effort.

When the clear notes of "Ten o'Clock" were sounded, the sad-eyed pre-Raphaelites and the droopy followers of Oscar Wilde filled the public eye with their antics. That a reputed eccentric should be the man to recall art to its true sense surprised the critical and jarred the poseurs. Sensible people welcomed the address as a turning point in the all submerging silliness. On the 15th of March the lecture was repeated at Cambridge before the University Art Society and on April 30th it was delivered at Oxford. The Royal Academy Students' Club, the Society of British Artists, and the Fine Arts Society also heard "Ten o'Clock," — in all six public deliveries.

Twenty-five copies were printed for private use in 1885, but the call for a public edition led to an issue in small quarto form, bearing the stamp of the butterfly, from the press of Chatto & Windus, in 1888. Mr. Whistler personally supervised the printing — selecting type and covers, making it uniform with his previously issued "Whistler vs. Ruskin," and "Notes, Harmonies and Nocturnes." It was issued in the same form in Boston the same year by Houghton, Mifflin and Company, and

in Paris, by Perrin et Cie, from a translation by Stéphane Mallarmé.

When, in 1890, impelled by the conceit of Sheridan Ford's "Gentle Art of Making Enemies" Whistler recast the volume, he included "Ten o'Clock" in the collection of his adventures with the pen. It earned its place in the compilation by having been the means of splitting his relations with Algernon Charles Swinburne. They had long been friends. The publication of the essay in 1888 caused the poet to indulge in a critical review in the *Fortnightly* of June, 1888. "Freeing a Last Friend," a letter to the *London World* announced their parting on behalf of the artist. From some strange mental twist in reading "Ten o'Clock," Swinburne had chosen to regard it as the "thrust of a tongue in a smiling cheek," had in short failed to grasp the strong, serious intent of the essay, and this Whistler resented. "Who are you," he asked Swinburne, "deserting your Muse, that you should insult my Goddess with familiarity, and the manners of approval common to the manners of the market-place?"

Theodore Watts Dunton, with whom Swinburne lived as a brother, received the missive in his absence and took it to Whistler unopened, imploring him to destroy it and breed no quarrel. This he refused to do. Swinburne, deeply affronted, declared that he would never again speak to Whistler, and kept his word.

That such a Philistine could remain long in harmony with British art was not to be expected. Made the head of the Society of British Artists, clashes followed of such fierceness that soon after the publication of "Ten o'Clock" but not in

consequence of it, he resigned the presidency. Many others followed. As he tersely put it, "The artists retired, the British remained."

Surviving all controversies "Ten o'Clock" continues to command attention and interest. The Schools of Ruskin, and the critics who assailed its views are dead. Other issues were required after the wide circulation in "The Gentle Art." The Old Dominion Shop in Chicago produced an edition in 1904, containing also Mr. Swinburne's comment and Whistler's reply. The same year it found its way into German, translated by Theodor Knorr and printed in Strassburg by J. H. Ed. Heitz. The Alderbrink Press in Chicago produced a third American edition in 1907, and in 1908 the Marion Press, Jamaica, Long Island, reproduced the lecture in fac-simile of its original form.

Secure in his fame, Whistler holds a rare place in the history of art. "He took," as Sheridan Ford has written, "the methods of Velasquez and the Japanese, and, with the might of his marvellous genius, shaped for the Nineteenth Century's nerves and needs, supreme effects in decoration, unsurpassed and unsurpassable. In art pictorial whatever he touched he adorned."

DON C. SEITZ.

Cos Cob, Conn., Oct. 1, 1916.

MR. WHISTLER'S

“TEN O'CLOCK”

He talked of art, certainly for art's sake, with the passionate reverence of the lover, and with the joyous certainty of one who knows himself beloved. . . . He only said to me, I suppose, what he had been saying and writing for fifty years; it was his gospel, which he had preached mockingly, that he might disconcert the mockers; but he said it all like one possessed of a conviction, and as if he were stating that conviction with his first ardour.

Now, in all this, which was once supposed to be so revolutionary, so impudent even, there is just so much exaggeration as wit lends to any single aspect of truth. But it is truth, and that aspect of truth which, in our time, most needs emphasis.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is with great hesitation and much misgiving that I appear before you, in the character of The Preacher.

If timidity be at all allied to the virtue modesty, and can find favour in your eyes, I pray you, for the sake of that virtue, accord me your utmost indulgence.

I would plead for my want of habit, did it not seem preposterous, judging from precedent, that aught save the most efficient effrontery could be ever expected in connection with my subject—for I will not conceal from you that I mean to talk about Art. Yes, Art—that has of late become, as far as much discussion and writing can make it, a sort of common topic for the tea-table.

Art is upon the Town!—to be chucked under the chin by the passing gallant—to be enticed within the gates of the householder—to be coaxed into company, as a proof of culture and refinement.

If familiarity can breed contempt, certainly Art—or what is currently taken for it—has been brought to its lowest stage of intimacy.

The people have been harassed with Art in every guise, and vexed with many methods as to its endurance. They have been told how they shall love Art, and live with it. Their homes have been invaded, their walls covered with paper, their very dress taken to task—until, roused at last, bewildered and filled with the doubts and discomforts of senseless suggestion, they resent such intrusion, and cast forth the false prophets, who have brought the very name of the beautiful into disrepute, and derision upon themselves.

Alas! ladies and gentlemen, Art has been maligned. She has naught in common with such practices. She is a goddess of dainty thought—reticent of habit, abjuring all obtrusiveness, purposing in no way to better others.

She is, withal, selfishly occupied with her own perfection only—having no desire to teach—seeking and finding the beautiful in all conditions and in all times, as did her high priest Rembrandt, when he saw picturesque grandeur and noble dignity in the Jews' quarter of Amsterdam, and lamented not that its inhabitants were not Greeks.

As did Tintoret and Paul Veronese, among the Venetians, while not halting to change the brocaded silks for the classic draperies of Athens.

As did, at the Court of Philip, Velasquez, whose *Infantas*, clad in inæsthetic hoops, are, as works of Art, of the same quality as the Elgin marbles.

No reformers were these great men — no improvers of the ways of others ! Their productions alone were their occupation, and, filled with the poetry of their science, they required not to alter their surroundings — for, as the laws of their Art were revealed to them, they saw, in the development of their work, that real beauty which, to them, was as much a matter of certainty and triumph as is to the astronomer the verification of the result, foreseen with the light given to him alone. In all this, their world was completely severed from that of their fellow-creatures with whom sentiment is mistaken for poetry ; and for whom there is no perfect work that shall not be explained by the benefit conferred upon themselves.

Humanity takes the place of Art, and God’s creations are excused by their usefulness. Beauty is confounded with virtue, and, before a work of Art, it is asked : “What good shall it do ?”

Hence it is that nobility of action, in this life, is hopelessly linked with the merit of the work that portrays it ; and thus the people have acquired the habit of looking, as who should say, not *at* a picture, but *through* it, at some human fact, that shall, or shall not, from a

social point of view, better their mental or moral state. So we have come to hear of the painting that elevates, and of the duty of the painter—of the picture that is full of thought, and of the panel that merely decorates.

A favourite faith, dear to those who teach, is that certain periods were especially artistic, and that nations, readily named, were notably lovers of Art.

So we are told that the Greeks were, as a people, worshippers of the beautiful, and that in the fifteenth century Art was engrained in the multitude.

That the great masters lived in common understanding with their patrons — that the early Italians were artists — all — and that the demand for the lovely thing produced it.

That we, of to-day, in gross contrast to this Arcadian purity, call for the ungainly, and obtain the ugly.

That, could we but change our habits and climate — were we willing to wander in groves — could we be roasted out of broadcloth — were we to do without haste, and journey without speed, we should again *require* the spoon of Queen Anne, and pick at our peas with the fork of two prongs. And so, for the flock, little hamlets grow near Hammersmith, and the steam horse is scorned.

Useless! quite hopeless and false is the effort! — built upon fable, and all because “a wise man has

uttered a vain thing and filled his belly with the East wind."

Listen! There never was an artistic period.

There never was an Art-loving nation.

In the beginning, man went forth each day — some to do battle, some to the chase ; others, again, to dig and to delve in the field — all that they might gain and live, or lose and die. Until there was found among them one, differing from the rest, whose pursuits attracted him not, and so he staid by the tents with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd.

This man, who took no joy in the ways of his brethren — who cared not for conquest, and fretted in the field — this designer of quaint patterns — this deviser of the beautiful — who perceived in Nature about him curious curvings, as faces are seen in the fire — this dreamer apart, was the first artist.

And when, from the field and from afar, there came back the people, they took the gourd — and drank from out of it.

And presently there came to this man another — and, in time, others — of like nature, chosen by the Gods — and so they worked together ; and soon they fashioned, from the moistened earth, forms resembling the gourd.

And with the power of creation, the heirloom of the artist, presently they went beyond the slovenly suggestion of Nature, and the first vase was born, in beautiful proportion.

And the toilers tilled, and were athirst; and the heroes returned from fresh victories, to rejoice and to feast; and all drank alike from the artists' goblets, fashioned cunningly, taking no note the while of the craftsman's pride, and understanding not his glory in his work; drinking at the cup, not from choice, not from a consciousness that it was beautiful, but because, forsooth, there was none other!

And time, with more state, brought more capacity for luxury, and it became well that men should dwell in large houses, and rest upon couches, and eat at tables; whereupon the artist, with his artificers, built palaces, and filled them with furniture, beautiful in proportion and lovely to look upon.

And the people lived in marvels of art — and ate and drank out of masterpieces — for there was nothing else to eat and to drink out of, and no bad building to live in; no article of daily life, of luxury, or of necessity, that had not been handed down from the design of the master, and made by his workmen.

And the people questioned not, *and had nothing to say in the matter.*

So Greece was in its splendour, and Art reigned supreme — by force of fact, not by election — and there was no meddling from the outsider. The mighty warrior would no more have ventured to offer a design for the temple of Pallas Athene than would the sacred poet have proffered a plan for constructing the catapult.

And the Amateur was unknown — and the Dilettante undreamed of !

And history wrote on, and conquest accompanied civilisation, and Art spread, or rather its products were carried by the victors among the vanquished from one country to another. And the customs of cultivation covered the face of the earth, so that all peoples continued to use what *the artist alone produced*.

And centuries passed in this using, and the world was flooded with all that was beautiful, until there arose a new class, who discovered the cheap, and fore-saw fortune in the facture of the sham.

Then sprang into existence the tawdry, the common, the gew-gaw.

The taste of the tradesman supplanted the science of the artist, and what was born of the million went back to them, and charmed them, for it was after their own heart; and the great and the small, the statesman and the slave, took to themselves the abomination that was

tendered, and preferred it — and have lived with it ever since !

And the artist’s occupation was gone, and the manufacturer and the huckster took his place.

And now the heroes filled from the jugs and drank from the bowls — with understanding — noting the glare of their new bravery, and taking pride in its worth.

And the people — this time — had much to say in the matter — and all were satisfied. And Birmingham and Manchester arose in their might — and Art was relegated to the curiosity shop.

Nature contains the elements, in colour and form, of all pictures, as the keyboard contains the notes of all music.

But the artist is born to pick, and choose, and group with science, these elements, that the result may be beautiful — as the musician gathers his notes, and forms his chords, until he bring forth from chaos glorious harmony.

To say to the painter, that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player, that he may sit on the piano.

That Nature is always right, is an assertion, artistically, as untrue, as it is one whose truth is universally taken for granted. Nature is very rarely right, to such an extent even, that it might almost be said that Nature is usually wrong: that is to say, the condition of things that shall bring about the perfection of harmony worthy a picture is rare, and not common at all.

This would seem, to even the most intelligent, a doctrine almost blasphemous. So incorporated with our education has the supposed aphorism become, that its belief is held to be part of our moral being, and the

words themselves have, in our ear, the ring of religion. Still, seldom does Nature succeed in producing a picture.

The sun blares, the wind blows from the east, the sky is bereft of cloud, and without, all is of iron. The windows of the Crystal Palace are seen from all points of London. The holiday maker rejoices in the glorious day, and the painter turns aside to shut his eyes.

How little this is understood, and how dutifully the casual in Nature is accepted as sublime, may be gathered from the unlimited admiration daily produced by a very foolish sunset.

The dignity of the snow-capped mountain is lost in distinctness, but the joy of the tourist is to recognise the traveller on the top. The desire to see, for the sake of seeing, is, with the mass, alone the one to be gratified, hence the delight in detail.

And when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanili, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairy-land is before us—then the wayfarer hastens home; the working man and the cultured one, the wise man and the one of pleasure, cease to understand, as

they have ceased to see, and Nature, who, for once, has sung in tune, sings her exquisite song to the artist alone, her son and her master — her son in that he loves her, her master in that he knows her.

To him her secrets are unfolded, to him her lessons have become gradually clear. He looks at her flower, not with the enlarging lens, that he may gather facts for the botanist, but with the light of the one who sees in her choice selection of brilliant tones and delicate tints, suggestions of future harmonies.

He does not confine himself to purposeless copying, without thought, each blade of grass, as commended by the inconsequent, but, in the long curve of the narrow leaf, corrected by the straight tall stem, he learns how grace is wedded to dignity, how strength enhances sweetness, that elegance shall be the result.

In the citron wing of the pale butterfly, with its dainty spots of orange, he sees before him the stately halls of fair gold, with their slender saffron pillars, and is taught how the delicate drawing high upon the walls shall be traced in tender tones of orpiment, and repeated by the base in notes of graver hue.

In all that is dainty and lovable he finds hints for his own combinations, and *thus* is Nature ever his resource and always at his service, and to him is naught refused.

Through his brain, as through the last alembic, is distilled the refined essence of that thought which began with the Gods, and which they left him to carry out.

Set apart by them to complete their works, he produces that wondrous thing called the masterpiece, which surpasses in perfection all that they have contrived in what is called Nature; and the Gods stand by and marvel, and perceive how far away more beautiful is the Venus of Melos than was their own Eve.

For some time past, the unattached writer has become the middleman in this matter of Art, and his influence, while it has widened the gulf between the people and the painter, has brought about the most complete misunderstanding as to the aim of the picture.

For him a picture is more or less a hieroglyph or symbol of story. Apart from a few technical terms, for the display of which he finds an occasion, the work is considered absolutely from a literary point of view; indeed, from what other can he consider it? And in his essays he deals with it as with a novel — a history — or an anecdote. He fails entirely and most naturally to see its excellences, or demerits — artistic — and so degrades Art, by supposing it a method of bringing about a literary climax.

It thus, in his hands, becomes merely a means of perpetrating something further, and its mission is made a secondary one, even as a means is second to an end.

The thoughts emphasised, noble or other, are inevitably attached to the incident, and become more or less noble, according to the eloquence or mental quality of the writer, who looks, the while, with disdain, upon what he holds as “ mere execution ” — a matter belonging, he

believes, to the training of the schools, and the reward of assiduity. So that, as he goes on with his translation from canvas to paper, the work becomes his own. He finds poetry where he would feel it were he himself transcribing the event, invention in the intricacy of the *mise en scène*, and noble philosophy in some detail of philanthropy, courage, modesty, or virtue, suggested to him by the occurrence.

All this might be brought before him, and his imagination be appealed to, by a very poor picture — indeed, I might safely say that it generally is.

Meanwhile, the *painter’s* poetry is quite lost to him — the amazing invention, that shall have put form and colour into such perfect harmony, that exquisiteness is the result, he is without understanding — the nobility of thought, that shall have given the artist’s dignity to the whole, says to him absolutely nothing.

So that his praises are published, for virtues we would blush to possess — while the great qualities, that distinguish the one work from the thousand, that make of the masterpiece the thing of beauty that it is — have never been seen at all.

That this is so, we can make sure of, by looking back at old reviews upon past exhibitions, and reading the flatteries lavished upon men who have since been for-

gotten altogether — but, upon whose works, the language has been exhausted, in rhapsodies — that left nothing for the National Gallery.

A curious matter, in its effect upon the judgment of these gentlemen, is the accepted vocabulary, of poetic symbolism, that helps them, by habit, in dealing with Nature: a mountain, to them, is synonymous with height — a lake, with depth — the ocean, with vastness — the sun, with glory.

So that a picture with a mountain, a lake, and an ocean — however poor in paint — is inevitably “lofty,” “vast,” “infinite,” and “glorious” — on paper.

There are those also, sombre of mien, and wise with the wisdom of books, who frequent museums and burrow in crypts; collecting — comparing — compiling — classifying — contradicting.

Experts these — for whom a date is an accomplishment — a hall mark, success!

Careful in scrutiny are they, and conscientious of judgment — establishing, with due weight, unimportant

reputations — discovering the picture, by the stain on the back — testing the torso, by the leg that is missing — filling folios with doubts on the way of that limb — disputatious and dictatorial, concerning the birthplace of inferior persons — speculating, in much writing, upon the great worth of bad work.

True clerks of the collection, they mix memoranda with ambition, and, reducing Art to statistics, they “file” the fifteenth century, and “pigeon-hole” the antique !

Then the Preacher — “appointed” !

He stands in high places — harangues and holds forth.

Sage of the Universities — learned in many matters, and of much experience in all, save his subject.

Exhorting — denouncing — directing.

Filled with wrath and earnestness.

Bringing powers of persuasion, and polish of language, to prove — nothing.

Torn with much teaching — having naught to impart.

Impressive — important — shallow.

Defiant — distressed — desperate.

Crying out, and cutting himself — while the Gods hear not.

Gentle priest of the Philistine withal, again he ambles pleasantly from all point, and through many volumes, escaping scientific assertion — “babble of green fields.”

So Art has become foolishly confounded with education — that all should be equally qualified.

Whereas, while polish, refinement, culture, and breeding, are in no way arguments for artistic result, it is also no reproach to the most finished scholar or greatest gentleman in the land that he be absolutely without eye for painting or ear for music — that in his heart he prefer the popular print to the scratch of Rembrandt’s needle, or the songs of the hall to Beethoven’s “C minor Symphony.”

Let him have but the wit to say so, and not feel the admission a proof of inferiority.

Art happens — no hovel is safe from it, no Prince may depend upon it, the vastest intelligence cannot bring it about, and puny efforts to make it universal end in quaint comedy, and coarse farce.

This is as it should be — and all attempts to make it otherwise, are due to the eloquence of the ignorant, the zeal of the conceited.

The boundary line is clear. Far from me to propose to bridge it over — that the pestered people be pushed across. No! I would save them from further fatigue.

I would come to their relief, and would lift from their shoulders this incubus of Art.

Why, after centuries of freedom from it, and indifference to it, should it now be thrust upon them by the blind — until, wearied and puzzled, they know no longer how they shall eat or drink — how they shall sit or stand — or wherewithal they shall clothe themselves — without afflicting Art?

But, lo ! there is much talk without !

Triumphantly they cry, “ Beware ! This matter does indeed concern us. We also have our part in all true Art ! — for, remember the ‘ one touch of Nature ’ that ‘ makes the whole world kin.’ ”

True, indeed. But let not the unwary jauntily suppose that Shakespeare herewith hands him his passport to Paradise, and thus permits him speech among the chosen. Rather, learn that, in this very sentence, he is condemned to remain without — to continue with the common.

This one chord that vibrates with all — this “one touch of Nature” that calls aloud to the response of each — that explains the popularity of the “Bull” of Paul Potter — that excuses the price of Murillo’s “Conception” — this one unspoken sympathy that pervades humanity, is — Vulgarity !

Vulgarity — under whose fascinating influence “the many” have elbowed “the few,” and the gentle circle of Art swarms with the intoxicated mob of mediocrity, whose leaders prate and counsel, and call aloud, where the gods once spoke in whisper !

And now from their midst the Dilettante stalks abroad. The amateur is loosed. The voice of the æsthete is heard in the land, and catastrophe is upon us.

The meddler beckons the vengeance of the gods, and ridicule threatens the fair daughters of the land.

And there are curious converts to a weird *culte*, in which all instinct for attractiveness — all freshness and sparkle — all woman’s winsomeness — is to give way to a strange vocation for the unlovely — and this desecration in the name of the Graces !

Shall this gaunt, ill-at-ease, distressed, abashed mixture of *mauvaise honte* and desperate assertion, call itself artistic, and claim cousinship with the artist —

who delights in the dainty — the sharp, bright gaiety of beauty?

No! — a thousand times no! Here are no connections of ours.

We will have nothing to do with them.

Forced to seriousness, that emptiness may be hidden, they dare not smile —

While the artist, in fulness of heart and head, is glad, and laughs aloud, and is happy in his strength, and is merry at the pompous pretension — the solemn silliness that surrounds him.

For Art and Joy go together, with bold openness, and high head, and ready hand — fearing naught, and dreading no exposure.

Know, then, all beautiful women, that we are with you. Pay no heed, we pray you, to this outcry of the unbecoming — this last plea for the plain.

It concerns you not.

Your own instinct is near the truth — your own wit far surer guide than the untaught ventures of thick-heeled Apollos.

What! will you up and follow the first piper that leads you down Petticoat Lane, there, on a Sabbath, to gather, for the week, from the dull rags of ages,

wherewith to bedeck yourselves? that, beneath your travestied awkwardness, we have trouble to find your own dainty selves? Oh, fie! Is the world, then, exhausted? and must we go back because the thumb of the mountebank jerks the other way?

Costume is not dress.

And the wearers of wardrobes may not be doctors of taste!

For by what authority shall these be pretty masters? Look well, and nothing have they invented—nothing put together for comeliness’ sake.

Haphazard from their shoulders hang the garments of the hawker—combining in their person the motley of many manners with the medley of the mummers’ closet.

Set up as a warning, and a finger-post of danger, they point to the disastrous effect of Art upon the middle classes.

Why this lifting of the brow in depreciation of the present — this pathos in reference to the past?

If Art be rare to-day, it was seldom heretofore.

It is false, this teaching of decay.

The master stands in no relation to the moment at which he occurs — a monument of isolation — hinting at sadness — having no part in the progress of his fellow men.

He is also no more the product of civilisation than is the scientific truth asserted, dependent upon the wisdom of a period. The assertion itself requires the *man* to make it. The truth was from the beginning.

So Art is limited to the infinite, and beginning there cannot progress.

A silent indication of its wayward independence from all extraneous advance, is in the absolutely unchanged condition and form of implement since the beginning of things.

The painter has but the same pencil — the sculptor the chisel of centuries.

Colours are not more since the heavy hangings of night were first drawn aside, and the loveliness of light revealed.

Neither chemist nor engineer can offer new elements of the masterpiece.

False again, the fabled link between the grandeur of Art and the glories and virtues of the State, for Art feeds not upon nations, and peoples may be wiped from the face of the earth, but Art *is*.

It is indeed high time that we cast aside the weary weight of responsibility and copartnership, and know that, in no way, do our virtues minister to its worth, in no way do our vices impede its triumph !

How irksome ! how hopeless ! how superhuman the self-imposed task of the nation ! How sublimely vain the belief that it shall live nobly or art perish !

Let us reassure ourselves, at our own option is our virtue. Art we in no way affect.

A whimsical goddess, and a capricious, her strong sense of joy tolerates no dulness, and, live we never so spotlessly, still may she turn her back upon us.

As, from time immemorial, has she done upon the Swiss in their mountains.

What more worthy people ! Whose every Alpine gap yawns with tradition, and is stocked with noble story ;

yet, the perverse and scornful one will none of it, and the sons of patriots are left with the clock that turns the mill, and the sudden cuckoo, with difficulty restrained in its box !

For this was Tell a hero ! For this did Gessler die !

Art, the cruel jade, cares not, and hardens her heart, and hies her off to the East, to find, among the opium-eaters of Nankin, a favourite with whom she lingers fondly — caressing his blue porcelain, and painting his coy maidens, and marking his plates with her six marks of choice — indifferent, in her companionship with him, to all save the virtue of his refinement !

He it is who calls her — he who holds her !

And again to the West, that her next lover may bring together the Gallery at Madrid, and show to the world how the Master towers above all ; and in their intimacy they revel, he and she, in this knowledge ; and he knows the happiness untasted by other mortal.

She is proud of her comrade, and promises that, in after years, others shall pass that way, and understand.

So in all time does this superb one cast about for the man worthy of her love — and Art seeks the Artist alone.

Where he is, there she appears, and remains with him — loving and fruitful — turning never aside in moments

of hope deferred — of insult — and of ribald misunderstanding ; and when he dies she sadly takes her flight, though loitering yet in the land, from fond association, but refusing to be consoled.*

With the man, then, and not with the multitude, are her intimacies ; and in the book of her life the names inscribed are few, scant, indeed, the list of those who have helped to write her story of love and beauty.

* And so have we the ephemeral influence of the Master's memory—the afterglow, in which are warmed, for a while, the worker and disciple.

From the sunny morning, when, with her glorious Greek relenting, she yielded up the secret of repeated line, as, with his hand in hers, together they marked, in marble, the measured rhyme of lovely limb and draperies flowing in unison, to the day when she dipped the Spaniard's brush in light and air, and made his people live within their frames, and *stand upon their legs*, that all nobility and sweetness, and tenderness, and magnificence should be theirs by right, ages had gone by, and few had been her choice.

Countless, indeed, the horde of pretenders ! But she knew them not.

A teeming, seething, busy mass, whose virtue was industry, and whose industry was vice !

Their names go to fill the catalogue of the collection at home, of the gallery abroad, for the delectation of the bagman and the critic.

Therefore have we cause to be merry! — and to cast away all care — resolved that all is well — as it ever was — and that it is not meet that we should be cried at, and urged to take measures!

Enough have we endured of dulness! Surely are we weary of weeping, and our tears have been cozened from us falsely for they have called out woe! when there was no grief — and, alas! where all is fair!

We have then but to wait — until, with the mark of the gods upon him — there come among us again the chosen — who shall continue what has gone before. Satisfied that, even were he never to appear, the story of the beautiful is already complete — hewn in the marbles of the Parthenon — and broidered, with the birds, upon the fan of Hokusai — at the foot of Fusiyama.

APPENDIX

The Fortnightly Review article for June, 1888, which sundered a lifetime friendship, here follows word for word. Whistler's extracts, renamed by him, *An Apostasy*, with his marginal "Reflections" appeared in *The Gentle Art* (1890) and are printed in red ink that it may be seen at a glance to what extent and to whom provocation and disclaimer belong.

That Whistler was not letter perfect in his citations is of minor moment; that he put in italics certain words of the poet's indefensible outburst is of far greater interest, and these italicised passages we retain,—refinements of cruelty assuredly not lost on the author of *Under the Microscope*!

As if to leave no possible avenue of return or of escape open *Et tu, Brute!* and the ultimate word, *Freeing a Last Friend*, follow the poisoned arrows of "Reflections" beyond which invective could only become "full of sound and fury, signifying naught."

T. B. M.

MR. WHISTLER'S LECTURE ON ART

TO speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, may justly be required of the average witness; it cannot be expected, it should not be exacted, of any critical writer or lecturer on any form of art. Even when the writer is an acknowledged and indisputable master in his own line of work, it is not to be supposed or imagined that there cannot possibly be anything to add to his conclusions, or that his utterances are to be of necessity accepted without qualification or reserve. The great question is whether he is right or wrong in his main contention; whether the message he delivers is worthy or unworthy of consideration and acceptance in its most significant and distinctive point. And it appears to one at least of those unfortunate "outsiders" for whose judgment or whose "meddling" Mr. Whistler has so imperial and Olympian a contempt, that the most notable thing in the famous lecture on art which he has now transmitted to the printers is the assertion in terms of most felicitous accuracy, the explanation on grounds which no imaginable reader could mistake, of a dominant and central truth which is not more certain, more necessary, more important, with reference to any one of the arts than to any other; and which is more vital, more certain, more indispensable as a condition of creative work than any other axiom or postulate whatever. This truth is the principle of independence; the simple and sufficient gospel which affirms that the first duty of a workman in any particular line is to do good work in that and no other than that line, and that if he does this it is a matter of quite secondary consideration whether his work may or may not be commendable on any foreign or

Mr. Whistler's
Lecture on Art,
by Algernon
Charles Swin-
burne.—*Fort-
nightly Review*,
June, 1888.

external or accidental ground. It should be unnecessary to add that this principle cannot either fairly or plausibly be so strained and wrested as to cover, for example, the literary offences of French pornographers and coprologists. M. Zola and his merry men are artists only in the sense—if such a sense there be—in which the term is applicable to a dealer in coloured photographs of unmentionable subjects. Sweeping aside into the gutter such dirty little vermin as know no more of æsthetics than of ethics, of taste or intelligence than of decency or shame, we proceed to examine the question as seriously stated by an artist and a theorist of serious pretensions and indisputable accomplishments. And we find what we might have made sure of finding in the present case; brilliant and pungent wit, wisdom salted with paradox and reason spiced with eccentricity; truths and semi-truths, admirable propositions and questionable inferences. Much that Mr. Whistler has to say about the primary requisites and the radical conditions of art is not merely sound and solid good sense as well as vivid and pointed rhetoric, it is a message very specially needed by the present generation of students in art or letters. Those only who have laid it to heart may be permitted to point out that it is not all the truth; that it is by no manner of means an exhaustive and complete statement of the capacities and the duties, the objects and the properties of creative or imaginative art.

Let us begin at the end, as all reasonable people always do: we shall find that Mr. Whistler concedes to Greek art a place beside Japanese. Now this, on his own showing, will never do; it crosses, it contravenes, it nullifies, it pulverises his theory or his principle of artistic limitation. If Japanese art is right in confining itself to what can be “broidered upon the fan,”—and the gist of the whole argument is in favour of this assumption,—then the sculpture which appeals indeed first of all to

REFLECTION:
“If” indeed!

our perception of beauty, to the delight of the eye, to the wonder and the worship of the instinct or the sense, but which in every possible instance appeals also to far other intuitions and far other sympathies than these, is as absolutely wrong, as demonstrably inferior, as any picture or as any carving which may be so degenerate and so debased as to concern itself with a story or a subject. Assuredly Phidias thought of other things than "arrangements" * in marble—as certainly as Æschylus thought of other things than "arrangements" in metre. Nor, I am sorely afraid, can the adored Velasquez be promoted to a seat "at the foot of Fusi-yama." Japanese art is not merely the incomparable achievement of certain harmonies in colour; *it is the negation, the immolation, the annihilation of everything else.* By the code which accepts as the highest of models and of masterpieces the cups and fans and screens with which "the poor world" has been as grievously "pestered" of late years as ever it was in Shakespeare's time "with such waterflies—diminutives of nature" as excited the scorn of his moralising cynic, Velasquez is as unquestionably condemned as is Raphael or Titian. It is true that his miraculous power of hand (?) † makes beautiful for us the deformity of dwarfs, and dignifies the degradation of princes; but that is not the question. It is true, again, that Mr. Whistler's own merest "arrangements" in colour are lovely and effective; * but his portraits, to speak of these alone, are liable to the damning and intolerable imputation of possessing not merely other qualities than these, but qualities which actually appeal—I blush to remember and I shudder to record it—which actually appeal to the intelligence † and the emotions, to the mind and heart of the spectator. It would be quite useless for Mr. Whistler to protest—if haply he should be so disposed—that he never meant to put study of character and revelation of intellect into his portrait of Mr. Carlyle, or intense pathos of significance and tender depth of

REFLECTION:

* Because the Bard is blind, shall the Painter cease to see?

REFLECTION:

"Cups and fans and screens," and Hamilton vases, and figurines of Tanagra, and other "waterflies."

REFLECTION:

† Quite hopeless!

REFLECTION:

* Whereby it would seem that, for the Bard, the lovely is not necessarily "effective."

REFLECTION:

† The "lovely," therefore, confessedly does not appeal to the intelligence, emotions, mind, and heart of the Bard even when aided by the "effective."

expression into the portrait of his own venerable mother. The scandalous fact remains, that he has done so; and in so doing has explicitly violated and implicitly abjured the creed and the canons, the counsels and the catechism of Japan.

Apart from the crowning and central merit of this lecture, which I have attempted to indicate at starting, the most notable and memorable thing in it is rather the excellence of certain detached or detachable passages or phrases than any continuity of reasoning or coherence of argument. But some of these passages or phrases are very jewels of epigram or of illustration. What, for instance, can be happier or more sensible, wittier or more effective, than this? "To say to the painter that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player that he may sit on the piano." Not of course that this is a discovery of Mr. Whistler's; for the finest and the fullest evidence of its truth now extant in the world is flashed out on us from every great or characteristic work of Turner.

This, again, is a very just as well as a very striking sarcasm; though it does not exactly prove that there is no loveliness in distinct outline, no grandeur in luminous clearness.

"The dignity of the snow-capped mountain is lost in distinctness, but the joy of the tourist is to recognise the traveller on the top. The desire to see, for the sake of seeing, is, with the mass, alone the one to be gratified, hence the delight in detail."

But it is hardly to the countrymen of Crome and David Cox that the beauty and the glory of painted wind and cloud and mist can be preached as the gospel of a new revelation. However, we can but be grateful for this indirect protest against the kind of art which gives us landscapes worthy only of a botanist or geometrician, and seascapes which represent the most lovely and luminous and living and various and subtle in colour of all imaginable seas — our own incomparable Channel — as a dead

mass of densely stupid blue, so hard that if you were to hit it with a hammer the hammer would break into shivers, so monotonous and so monochromical that it would almost be a libel on the very Mediterranean itself.

Another excellent remark may be quoted from a later part of this desultory lecture: — “Art happens — no hovel is safe from it, no prince may depend upon it; the vastest intelligence cannot bring it about, and puny efforts to make it universal end in quaint comedy or coarse farce.”

Unquestionably they may or they must do so; but it does not follow that all efforts to widen the sphere of appreciation, to enlarge the circle of intelligence, must needs be puny or unprofitable. Good intentions will not secure good results; but neither — strange as it may seem — will the absence of good intentions. And when Mr. Whistler informs us that “there never was an artistic period,” we must reply that the statement, so far as it is true, is the flattest of all possible truisms; for no mortal ever maintained that there ever was a period in which all men were either good artists or good judges of art. But when we pass from the positive to the comparative degree of historic or retrospective criticism, we must ask whether the lecturer means to say that there have not been times when the general standard of taste and judgment, reason and perception, was so much higher than at other times that such periods may justly and accurately be defined as artistic. If he does mean to say this, he is beyond answer and beneath confutation: in other words, he is where an artist of Mr. Whistler’s genius and a writer of Mr. Whistler’s talents can by no possibility find himself. If he does not mean to say this, what he means to say is exactly as well worth saying, as valuable and as important a piece of information, as the news that Queen Anne is no more, or that two and two are not generally supposed to make five.

REFLECTION.

Of course I do mean this thing — though most imprudent was the saying of it! — for this Art truth the Poet resents with the people.
— June, 1888.

But if the light and glittering bark of this brilliant amateur in the art of letters is not invariably steered with equal dexterity of hand between the Scylla and Charybdis of paradox and platitude, it is impossible that in its course it should not once and again touch upon some point worth notice if not exploration. Even that miserable animal "the unattached writer" may gratefully and respectfully recognise his accurate apprehension and his felicitous application of wellnigh the most hackneyed verse in all the range of Shakespeare's — which yet is almost invariably misconstrued and misapplied. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin :" and this, as the poet goes on to explain, is that all, with one consent, prefer worthless but showy novelties to precious but familiar possessions. "This one chord that vibrates with all," says Mr. Whistler, who proceeds to cite artistic examples of the lamentable fact, "this one unspoken sympathy that pervades humanity, is — Vulgarity." But the consequence which he proceeds to indicate and to deplore is calculated to strike his readers with a sense of mild if hilarious astonishment. It is that men of sound judgment and pure taste, quick feelings and clear perceptions, most unfortunately and most inexplicably begin to make their voices "heard in the land." Porson, as all the world knows, observed of the Germans of his day that "in Greek" they were "sadly to seek." It is no discredit to Mr. Whistler if this is his case also: but then he would do well to eschew the use of a Greek term lying so far out of the common

REFLECTION: way as the word "aesthete." Not merely the only accurate meaning but the only possible meaning of that word is nothing more but nothing less than this: an intelligent, appreciative, quick-witted person; in a word, as the lexicon has it, "one who perceives." The man who is no aesthete stands confessed, by the logic of language and the necessity of the case, as a thick-witted, tasteless, senseless and impenetrable blockhead. I do

Je reviens donc
de Pontoise!

not wish to insult Mr. Whistler, but I feel bound to avow my impression that there is no man now living who less deserves the honour of enrolment in such ranks as these — of a seat in the synagogue of the anæsthetic. I cannot bring myself to descend to flattery so gross and insincere as would be the admission that a Saul of his spiritual stature is also among the prophets of Philistia; that his place is beside the blatant boobies with whom the imputation of intelligence — an imputation which they surely cannot apprehend on their own account — passes for a cutting and branding insult. It would no doubt be most unseemly, and to the shrinking modesty, the too sensitive diffidence of Mr. Whistler it would of course be quite exceptionally painful, to claim the title, to arrogate the honours, of a person so exceptionally endowed with good taste, right feeling, keen insight, sound judgment and clear perception, as specially to deserve the Platonic title of an æsthete; for no satire could be severe enough for the male or female fool who should venture to put forward so arrogant a claim; but it would be an incongruity even more portentous and prodigious, an incongruity for which Rabelais alone of all men could have supplied the fitting chain of epithets, if an artist of skill so consummate, of tact so refined, of so sensitive an instinct and so delicate an eccentricity, should use the word — if he knew the meaning of the word — as a term of ridicule or reproach. Such abuse of language is possible only to the drivelling desperation of venomous or fangless duncery: it is in higher and graver matters, of wider bearing and of deeper import, that we find it necessary to dispute the apparently serious propositions or assertions of Mr. Whistler. *How far the witty tongue may be thrust into the smiling cheek* when the lecturer pauses to take breath between these remarkably brief paragraphs it would be certainly indecorous and possibly superfluous to inquire. But his theorem is unquestionably calculated to provoke the loudest

REFLECTION:

* Is not, then,
the funeral
hymn a gladness
to the singer, if
the verse be
beautiful?

Certainly the
funeral monument, to be
worthy the
Nation's sorrow
buried beneath it,
must first be a
joy to the sculp-
tor who designed
it.

The Bard's rea-
soning is of the
People. His
Tragedy is theirs.
As one of them,
the man may
weep—yet will
the artist rejoice
—for to him is
not "A thing of
beauty a joy for
ever"?

† At what point
of my "O'clock"
does Mr. Swin-
burne find this
last—his own
inconsequence?

REFLECTION:

Before the mar-
vels of centuries,
silence, the only
tribute of the
outsider, is by
him refused—
and the dignity of
ignorance lost in
speech.

REFLECTION:

If an æsthetic,
Bard is not col-
lector!

and the heartiest mirth that ever acclaimed the advent of Momus or Erycina. For it is this—that * "Art and Joy go together," and that † *tragic art is not art at all*.

"Arter that, let's have a glass of wine," said a famous countryman of Mr. Whistler's, on the memorable occasion when he was impelled to address his friend Mr. Brick in the immortal words, "Keep cool, Jefferson. Don't bust." The admonition may not improbably be required by the majority of readers who come suddenly and unawares upon this transcendent and pyramidal pleasantry. The laughing Muse of the lecturer, "quam Jocus circumvolat," must have glanced round in expectation of the general appeal, "After that, let us take breath." And having done so, they must have remembered that they were not in a serious world; that they were in the fairy-land of fans, in the paradise of pipkins, in the limbo of blue china, screens, pots, plates, jars, joss-houses, and all the fortuitous frippery of Fusi-yama.

And yet, they will presently have reflected, even this hyperbolical extravagance of jocularity does not succeed in launching a really original paradox. There have always been audacious humourists who asserted, and anæsthetic imbeciles who believed, that the spirit of art was essentially and exclusively joyous, or exclusively and essentially mournful. A type of the former class of fool has been taken after the very life by the yet undethroned sovereign of English poetesses.

"My critic Jobson recommends more mirth,
Because a cheerful genius suits the times,
And all true poets laugh unquenchably
Like Shakespeare and the gods. That's very hard.
The gods may laugh, and Shakespeare: Dante smiles
With such a needy heart on two pale lips,
We cry, 'Weep rather, Dante!'"

It is a cruel but an inevitable Nemesis which reduces even a man of real genius, keen-witted and sharp-sighted, to the level of the critic Jobson, to the level of the *dotard and the dunce*, when paradox is discoloured by personality and merriment is distorted by malevolence. (!) No man who really knows the [excellence, the variety, the serious and noble] qualities of Mr. Whistler's best work, will imagine that he really believes the highest expression of his art to be realised in reproduction of the grin and glare, the smirk and leer, of Japanese womanhood as represented in its professional types of beauty; but to all appearance he would fain persuade us that he does. Unhappily for his chance of success in the attempt to deprecate and degrade his genius to an equality with the highest type of Asiatic æstheticism, his etchings and his portraits have not yet been consigned to the flames which must of necessity consume them before he can possibly be accepted as a genuine child of Japan. In the latter of the two portraits to which I have already referred there is an expression of living character, an intensity of pathetic power, which gives to that noble work something of the impressiveness proper to a tragic or elegiac poem.

[Words omitted by Whistler.]

This, however, is an exception to the general rule of Mr. Whistler's way of work: an exception, it may be alleged, which proves the rule. But that apology will by no means hold water. In one of the delightful minor works of an always delightful humourist, we are introduced to a good man of the name of William—I cannot, I will not allow myself to imagine that the perversity of political malevolence could suggest an illusion which nothing should induce me to hint at—who having led a life of abnormal virtue for many, many years, is induced to commit a treacherous and rascally crime by pure curiosity to know from experience what may be the feelings of a deliberate malefactor. Now the violation of principle committed on that

occasion by Mr. Gilbert's exemplary experimentalist was not graver in its departure from an established standard of conduct than is this infringement by Mr. Whistler of the hard and fast line laid down by himself as the condition of all true art. A single infraction of the moral code, a single breach of artistic law, suffices to vitiate the position of the preacher. And this is no slight escapade, [no venial] or casual aberration; it is a full and frank defiance, a deliberate and elaborate denial, hurled right in the face of Japanese jocosity, flung straight in the teeth of the theory which condemns high art, under penalty of being considered intelligent, to remain eternally on the grin.

[Words omitted
by Whistler.]

If it be objected that to treat this theorem gravely is "to consider too curiously" the tropes and the phrases of *a jester* of genius, I have only to answer that it very probably may be so, but that the excuse for such error must be sought in the existence of the genius. A man of genius is scarcely at liberty to choose whether he shall or shall not be considered as a serious figure—one to be acknowledged and respected as an equal or a superior, not applauded and dismissed as *a tumbler or a clown*. And if the better part of Mr. Whistler's work as an artist is to be accepted as the work of a serious and intelligent creature, it would seem incongruous and preposterous to dismiss the more characteristic points of his theory as a lecturer with the chuckle or the shrug of mere amusement or amazement. Moreover, if considered as a joke, a mere joke, and nothing but a joke, this gospel of the grin has hardly matter or meaning enough in it to support so elaborate a structure of paradoxical rhetoric. It must be taken, therefore, as something serious in the main; and if so taken, and read by the light reflected from Mr. Whistler's more characteristically brilliant canvases, it may not improbably recall a certain phrase of Molière's, which at once passed into a proverb—"Vous êtes orfèvre, M. Josse." That worthy tradesman, it will be remem-

bered, was of opinion that nothing could be so well calculated to restore a drooping young lady to mental and physical health as the present of a handsome set of jewels. *Mr. Whistler's opinion that there is nothing like leather—of a jovial and Japanese design—savour[s] somewhat of the Oriental cordwainer.*

But if we must more or less respectfully decline to accept "The Preacher" as a prophet, we may all agree in applause of the brilliant humour which barbs the shafts of good sense and sound reasoning aimed by the satirist at the common enemies of all good work—"a teeming, seething, busy mass, whose virtue was industry, and whose industry was vice." Nothing can be truer, and nothing could be more happily expressed. And, as a wiser than all the wise men of Greece was wont impressively to observe, "the bearings of this observation lays in the application on it." That was no part of Captain Bunsby's duty; it was apparently no part of the lecturer's; and it certainly is no part of mine.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

REFLECTION:

A keen commercial summing up—excused by the "Great Emperor!"



“ET TU, BRUTE!”

WHY, O brother! did you not consult with me before printing, in the face of a ribald world, *that you also misunderstand*, and are capable of saying so, with vehemence and repetition.

Have I then left no man on his legs?—and have I shot down the singer in the far off, when I thought him safe at my side?

Cannot the man who wrote *Atalanta*— and the *Ballads* beautiful,— can he not be content to spend his life with *his* work, which should be his love,— and has for him no misleading doubt and darkness—that he should so stray about blindly in his brother’s flower-beds and bruise himself!

Is life then so long with him, and *his* art so short, that he shall dawdle by the way and wander from his path, reducing his giant intellect—garrulous upon matters to him unknown, that the scoffer may rejoice and the Philistine be appeased while he takes up the parable of the mob and proclaims himself their spokesman and fellow-sufferer? O Brother! where is thy sting! O Poet! where is thy victory!

How have I offended! and how shall you in the midst of your poisoned page hurl with impunity the boomerang rebuke? “Paradox is discoloured by personality, and merriment is distorted by malevolence.”

Who are you, deserting your Muse, that you should insult my Goddess with familiarity, and the manners of approach common to the reasoners in the market-place. “Hearken to me,” you cry, “and I will point out how this man, who has passed his life in her worship, is a tumbler and a clown of the

From *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*. (London, 1890.)

booths — how he who has produced that which I fain must acknowledge — is a jester in the ring ! ”

Do we not speak the same language ? Are we strangers, then, or, in our Father’s house are there so many mansions that you lose your way, my brother, and cannot recognise your kin ?

Shall I be brought to the bar by my own blood, and be borne false witness against before the plebian people ? Shall I be made to stultify myself by what I never said — and shall the strength of your testimony turn upon me ? “ If ” — “ If Japanese Art is right in confining itself to what can be broidered upon the fan ” and again “ that he really believes the highest expression of his art to be realised in reproduction of the grin and glare, the smirk and leer ” and further “ the theory which condemns high art, under the penalty of being considered intelligent, to remain eternally on the grin ” and much more !

“ Amateur writer ! ” Well should I deserve the reproach, had I ventured ever beyond the precincts of my own science — and fatal would have been the exposure, as you, with heedless boldness, have unwittingly proven.

Art tainted with philanthropy — that better Art result ! — Poet and Peabody !

You have been misled — you have mistaken the pale demeanour and joined hands for an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual earnestness. For you, these are the serious ones, and, for them, you others are the serious matter. Their joke is their work. For me — why should I refuse myself the grim joy of this grotesque tragedy — and, with them now, you all are my joke !

FREEING A LAST FRIEND

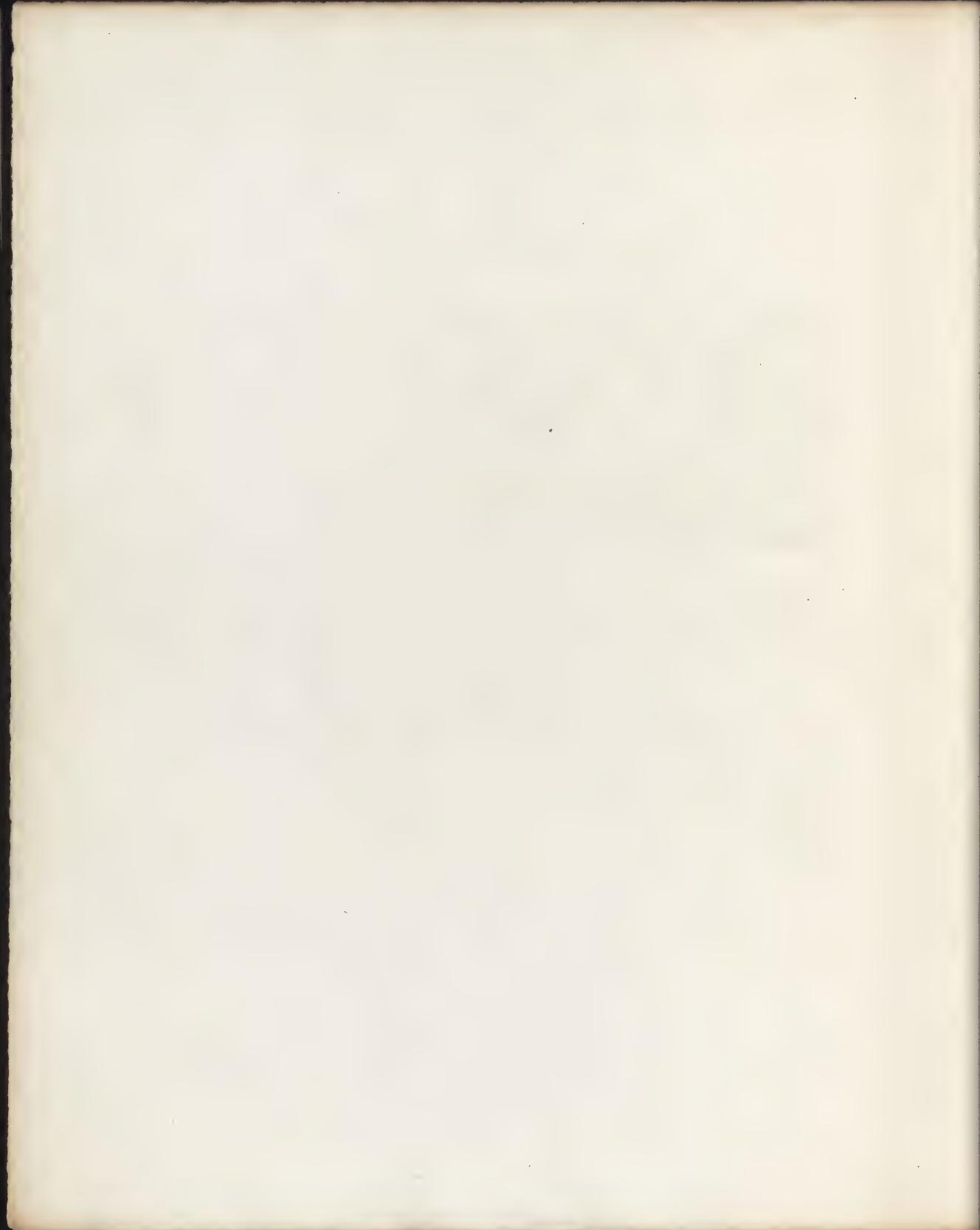
BRAVO! Bard! and exquisitely written, I suppose, as becomes your state.

The scientific irrelevancies and solemn popularities, less elaborately embodied, I seem to have met with before—in papers signed by more than one serious and unqualified sage, whose mind also was not narrowed by knowledge.

I have been “personal,” you say; and, faith! you prove it!

Thank you, my dear! I have lost a *confrère*; but, then, I have gained an acquaintance—one Algernon Swinburne—“outsider”—Putney.

The World, June
3, 1888. Letter
to Mr. Swin-
burne.



BEFORE THE MIRROR

After what has been shown as following in the wake of *Ten o'Clock* it would be strange to overlook that both these men of genius were once dear friends and comrades; also one finds warrant for believing "the bitterness with which Whistler wrote *Et tu, Brute!* had gone with *les neiges d'antan*." For we must take into consideration a letter by him, almost at the close, to the London *Morning Post* explaining that the poem on *The Little White Girl* "was written, in my studio, after the picture was painted. And the writing . . . was a rare and graceful tribute from the poet to the painter—a noble recognition of one work by the production of a nobler one." Therefore, no greater homage could be rendered than to place as Postlude what might with equal assurance have stood as Prelude to Whistler's prose masterpiece; that lecture wherein he "put all he had learned of art, which he knew to be unchangeable and everlasting." The picture "which will always be recognised as one of the few great pictures of the world," was seen by Swinburne and his poem written in 1865. "Its haunting beauty is so full of poetic charm and mystery that one cannot wonder that it inspired Swinburne to write the poem entitled *Before the Mirror*." If unable to reproduce the picture I can, at least, print the verses that Swinburne said Rossetti told him "were better than the painting, and that Whistler ranked them far above it."

T. B. M.

BEFORE THE MIRROR

(VERSES WRITTEN UNDER A PICTURE)

INSCRIBED TO J. A. WHISTLER

I

WHITE rose in red rose-garden
Is not so white ;
Snowdrops that plead for pardon
And pine for fright
Because the hard East blows
Over their maiden rows
Grow not as this face grows from pale to bright.

Behind the veil, forbidden,
Shut up from sight,
Love, is there sorrow hidden,
Is there delight?
Is joy thy dower or grief,
White rose of weary leaf,
Late rose whose life is brief, whose loves are light?

Soft snows that hard winds harden
Till each flake bite
Fill all the flowerless garden
Whose flowers took flight
Long since when summer ceased,
And men rose up from feast,
And warm west wind grew east, and warm day night.

II

“ Come snow, come wind or thunder
High up in air,
I watch my face, and wonder
At my bright hair ;
Nought else exalts or grieves
The rose at heart, that heaves
With love of her own leaves and lips that pair.

“ She knows not loves that kissed her
She knows not where,
Art thou the ghost, my sister,
White sister there,
Am I the ghost, who knows ?
My hand, a fallen rose,
Lies snow-white on white snows, and takes no care.

“I cannot see what pleasures
Or what pains were ;
What pale new loves and treasures
New years will bear ;
What beam will fall, what shower,
What grief or joy for dower ;
But one thing knows the flower ; the flower is fair.”

III

Glad, but not flushed with gladness,
Since joys go by ;
Sad, but not bent with sadness,
Since sorrows die ;
Deep in the gleaming glass
She sees all past things pass,
And all sweet life that was lie down and lie.

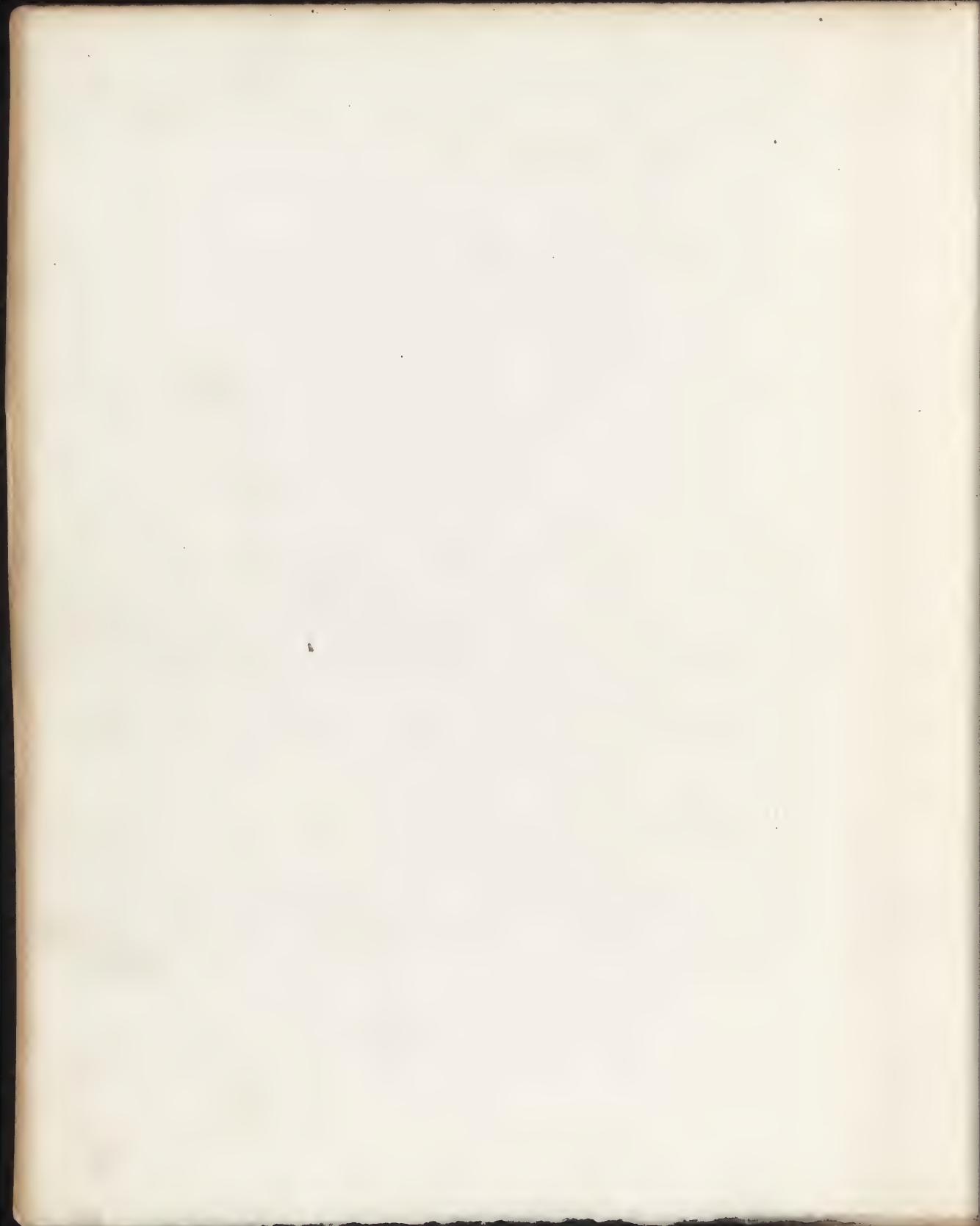
There glowing ghosts of flowers
Draw down, draw nigh ;
And wings of swift spent hours
Take flight and fly ;
She sees by formless gleams,
She hears across cold streams,
Dead mouths of many dreams that sing and sigh.

Face fallen and white throat lifted,
With sleepless eye
She sees old loves that drifted,
She knew not why,
Old loves and faded fears
Float down a stream that hears
The flowing of all men's tears beneath the sky.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

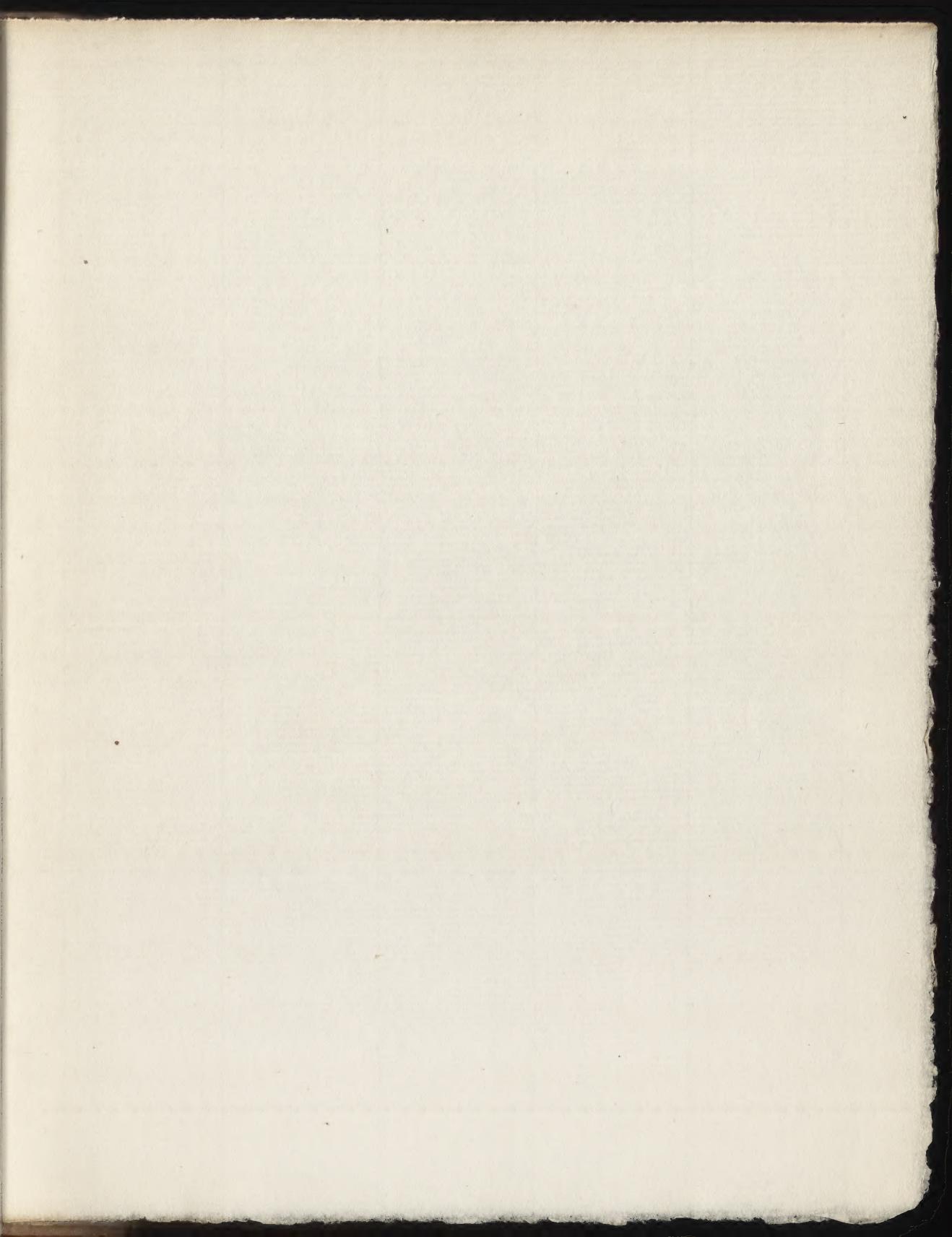
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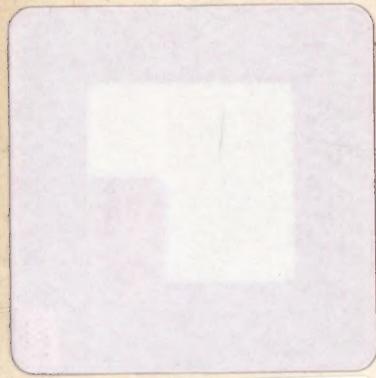








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